American Disabilities Act

Section 508 Compliance

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Introduction

- On 21 December 2000, the Architectural and Transportation Board issued its final ruling on accessibility standards for electronic and information technology covered by section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998.

Overview

- Section 508 requires that when Federal agencies develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology, they shall ensure that the electronic and information technology allows Federal employees with disabilities to have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access to and use of information and data by Federal employees who are not individuals with disabilities, unless an undue burden would be imposed on the agency.

What does this mean?

- This requires that all: Software applications and operating systems; Web-based Intranet and Internet information and applications; Telecommunications products; Video and multimedia products; Self contained, closed products; and Desktop portable computers be reviewed and brought into compliance.
- **All Federal agencies must be in compliance by 21 June 2001.**

Must RIA Comply?

- A Federal agency does not have to comply with the technology accessibility standards if it would impose an undue burden to do so. This is consistent with language used in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other civil rights legislation, where the term 'undue burden' has been defined as "significant difficulty or expense." However, the agency must explain why meeting the standards would pose an undue burden for a given procurement action, and must still provide people with disabilities access to the information or data that is affected.

What about existing electronic and Information technology?

- The standards are to be applied prospectively and do not require Federal agencies to retrofit existing electronic and information technology. As agencies upgrade and change their electronic and information technology, they must comply with the standards.

Where to Get More Information

- https://ri-app-nt2.ria.army.mil/riahome/ada/default.htm
- http://www.section508.gov/
- http://www.access-board.gov/news/508-final.htm

What is Information Technology doing?

- Information Technology is in the process of scanning all existing and new web pages with “Bobby” to ensure compliance.
- Information Technology is ensuring that all new procurement actions include clauses that accommodate Section 508 requirements.